

DIABETES

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program
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WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a non-contagious disease that affects the way the body uses food. Normally, the body changes food into a form of sugar called glucose. Then the blood carries this glucose to cells throughout the body. There, with the help of insulin (a hormone), glucose is changed into quick energy for immediate use by cells or is stored for future needs. Insulin is made in the pancreas, a small organ that lies behind the stomach. Turning food into energy is important. The body depends on food for every action, from thinking, pumping blood, running and jumping.

In diabetes, food is changed into glucose readily enough, but there is a problem with insulin. In Type I (Insulin-dependent diabetes), the pancreas can not make insulin. In Type II (non-insulin-dependent diabetes), the body makes some insulin but either makes too little and/or has trouble using the insulin. When insulin is absent or ineffective, the glucose in the bloodstream cannot be used by the cells to make energy. Instead, glucose collects in the blood, eventually leading to the high sugar levels that may hurt your eyes, kidneys, nerves, or heart.

Type I Diabetes

Type II Diabetes

Frequent urination	Any Type I symptoms
Excessive thirst	Recurrent or hard to heal infection
Extreme hunger	Drowsiness
Dramatic weight loss	Blurred vision
Irritability	Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
Nausea & vomiting	Itching
Frequent urination	

LONG-TERM COMPLICATIONS

Diabetic complications are usually caused by changes in the blood vessels and nerves. Unfortunately they can include eye and kidney disease, heart attack or stroke, numbness or pain in legs, and/or foot infections leading to gangrene.

SHORT TERM COMPLICATIONS

- **HYPOGLYCEMIA** -- low blood sugar, insulin reaction or insulin shock. It is caused when insulin

intake is too great for amount of food eaten. Low blood sugar must be treated quickly, with sugar or sugary foods because, untreated, hypoglycemia can lead to unconsciousness. The typical symptoms include headaches, feeling cold, clammy, nervous, shaky, weak, or very hungry. If you feel these symptoms you need to eat a snack.

- **HYPERGLYCEMIA** -- high blood sugar. Occurs when there is too little insulin for food eaten. Illness and emotional stress can also cause high blood sugar. The warning signs are frequent urination, excessive thirst, and nausea. Treat high blood sugar with the help of a Health Care Professional.
- **KETOACIDOSIS** -- diabetic coma. Usually insulin and blood sugar are so out of balance that high levels of ketones (poison) accumulate in the blood. Symptoms of high ketone levels include dry mouth, great thirst, loss of appetite, excessive urination, dry and flushed skin, labored breathing, fruity smelling breath, and possibly vomiting, abdominal pain, and unconsciousness.

PREVENTION & TREATMENT

Insulin-dependent diabetes cannot be prevented. Non-insulin-dependent diabetes can often be prevented by maintaining normal body weight and keeping physically fit throughout life. The major aim of treatment is to control blood-sugar levels. This is usually accomplished through:

- Diet: Eat a well balanced diet with limited sugar and fats
- Exercise: Regularly
- Medications: Take as prescribed by physician

Research suggests control of blood sugar levels can help prevent/delay long-term diabetic complications.

LIVING WITH DIABETES

Diabetes is a huge challenge. At times, it may cause a person to become angry or frustrated. Before these feelings become unmanageable, or if you have further questions, talk to a Health Care Professional.